



Suggested Process for Establishing a Tourism Zoning System

STEP 1: Refer to the General Management Plan (GMP) for the zoning, special areas and locations where tourism could be an appropriate strategy. In general, the GMP should be the most important guideline for developing any activity in a protected area.

STEP 2: Obtain a base map of the protected area/ecotourism site. While the map should be large enough to cover the entire area, it must also contain sufficient detail to allow you to locate specific ecotourism attractions and infrastructure in relation to significant physical features, such as rivers and streams, mountains and hills, primary forest vs. altered vegetation and agricultural lands, etc. If a zoning system already exists, the map should include those zones and their boundaries. Locate sensitive or environmentally fragile sites

STEP 3: Locate on the map particularly sensitive or environmentally fragile sites.

STEP 4: Indicate where proposed new infrastructure would be located, such as trails, overlooks, campgrounds, visitor centers, guard stations and ecolodges. Consider what sorts of experiences and/or situations visitors wish to have while at the site (e.g., small groups, large groups, few encounters with other visitors, etc.).

STEP 5: Compare the proposed location of visitor attractions and infrastructure with the location of environmentally sensitive sites as well as with the present zoning system. Are there real or potential conflicts? If visitor sites are located at or near fragile sites, can management activities ensure that visitor impacts will not occur, or will be within acceptable limits? Is the present zoning system compatible with what you are proposing for visitor use?

STEP 6: Determine the final location of visitor infrastructure and attractions, after evaluating the relationship of visitor attractions with other potentially conflicting situations. These locations should be verified by site visits.

STEP 7: Prepare a preliminary zoning system that incorporates recommendations for visitor use zones. Intensive use zones might be designated at those places where high visitor concentrations occur, e.g., visitor centers, campgrounds, etc.; extensive use zones could be designated to cover the sites where visitor use is more dispersed. If possible, have two teams prepare a zoning system and then compare results to come up with the best one.

STEP 8: Compare your proposed zoning system with the preexisting system. Do changes need to be made in one or the other in order to come up with a definitive zoning system? Consider how visitor access and flow will work under your proposed system. Propose your system to the site's managers and staff. Do they agree?

STEP 9: Develop a final zoning system. Describe each zone following the format described under "Zoning Attributes." Include biophysical, social and management attributes for each zone; these will guide you in determining management guidelines for each zone.

STEP 10: Define the rules and regulations that will apply to the specific visitor sites and zones. What is the management capacity of the administrative authority? Is it capable, or will it be capable within a few years, of effectively managing a complex ecotourism program, or should it be kept simple?



ZONING, SITE-PLANNING & DESIGN

MODULE 8

Handout 8.7

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